



United States Attorney District of New Jersey

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MUSIC INDUSTRY PROMOTER PLEADS GUILTY TO DEFRAUDING NEW JERSEY INVESTOR IN CONCERT PROMOTION SCAM

TRENTON, N.J. – A music industry promoter pleaded guilty today to defrauding a New Jersey investor of approximately \$330,000 by fraudulently claiming to be promoting a series of Mariah Carey concerts in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, that never took place, U.S. Attorney Paul J. Fishman announced.

Antywan Ross, 43, formerly of Atlanta, Georgia, and now residing in Berkeley, California, entered his guilty plea to one count of wire fraud before United States District Judge Peter G. Sheridan in Trenton federal court. Judge Sheridan allowed Ross to remain on a \$250,000 bond until his sentencing, scheduled for October 13, 2010.

According to the Indictment to which Ross pleaded guilty and statements made in court:

During the Summer and Fall of 2008, Ross, through his company the RDA Group, claimed to be promoting a series of Mariah Carey concerts which were to take place in Dubai in late 2008. Stating that he needed money to pay start up expenses related to the concerts, Ross solicited a \$330,000 investment from a New Jersey-based investor, claiming the investor's money plus interest would be repaid within 45 days. To make it appear that the investor's money was secure, Ross employed an escrow agent who would not disburse the investor's funds until Ross provided proof that at least \$1 million in sponsorship funds had been committed to the concerts.

Despite not receiving any sponsorship commitments, Ross caused a number of fraudulent letters to be written, including one purportedly from a law firm, that made it appear that more than \$10 million in sponsorship money had been committed.

Ross admitted that after the fraudulent sponsorship letters had been delivered to the escrow agent and the investor, he sent an email to the escrow agent directing her to release the investor's money. Instead of using that money to pay for purported expenses related to putting on an international concert, Ross used the majority of the \$330,000 for his own personal benefit, including the purchase of an automobile. He also admitted that the Mariah Carey concerts in Dubai never took place and that he never repaid the investor.

The wire fraud charge to which Ross pleaded guilty carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison and a maximum fine of \$250,000, or twice the amount of loss caused by his offense. In addition, Ross agreed to pay restitution to the investor in the amount of \$325,404.62.

In determining the actual sentence, Judge Sheridan will consult the advisory United States Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges that take into account the severity and characteristics of the offense, the defendant's criminal history, if any, and other factors. The Judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence. Parole has been abolished in the federal system. Defendants who are given custodial terms must serve nearly all that time.

U.S. Attorney Fishman credited special agents of the United States Secret Service, under the direction of James Mottola, Acting Special Agent in Charge, Newark Field Office, with the investigation leading to today's guilty plea.

The government is represented by Assistant United States Attorney Matthew E. Beck of the U.S. Attorney's Office Economic Crimes Unit in Newark.

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Defense counsel: Brian Reilly, Assistant Federal Public Defender, Trenton, New Jersey